

## CHAPTER – 2

# EGYPTIAN CIVILIZATION

### Civilization and Culture :

Man with his highly skilled brain has created art, literature, religion and ethics. These things are termed as 'Culture'. Man also tries to create comfort to make his life happy. This is termed as 'Civilization'. Civilization and Culture overlap and are complementary to each other.

### The Dawn of Civilization:

With agriculture man started living a settled life. Human settlements developed along river valleys. Early man practiced Shifting cultivation, but later tried to keep the same land fertile. The Egyptian civilization is regarded as the most ancient civilization.

### Egyptian Civilization:

Egypt is known as the 'Land of Pyramids.' The Greek historian Herodotus described Egypt as the 'Gift of the Nile'.

### Political Organization:

King Menes was responsible for the unification of northern and southern kingdom. The king was called 'Pharaoh' and he was regarded as the 'Sun God'. For administrative purposes the kingdom was divided into forty to fifty provinces. Queen Hatshepsut was the first woman ruler and Queen Nefertiti was a famous administrator. King Amenhotep IV was a religious reformer.

### **Social Organization:**

Egyptian society was divided into three classes. The king, the priests and the nobles belonged to the first class. Merchants, architects, artists, and people belonging to the medical profession formed the second class. The third class consisted of craftsmen, farmers and labourers. Prisoners of war and slaves were exploited and formed the lowest class.

### **Life of the People:**

The basic unit of the society was the family. Women enjoyed hereditary rights. Ornaments were used by both men and women. Children played with toys, like hay balls and leather balls, chess and dice. Dance and music were other forms of entertainment.

### **Economic Life:**

Agriculture was the most important occupation, fishing, pottery, carpentry, mason work and ship building, were other occupations. Trade was carried on through barter system .

### **Arts and Science:**

The Pyramids of Egypt are one of the Wonders of the World .The Pyramid of Al-Giza was built by king Khufu. Sphinx is a big stone statue with the body of a lion and head of a human. The temple at Karnak is famous.

### **Drawing and Painting :**

Egyptians drew pictures on the walls of temples. They used the art of writing with 'Papyrus' rolls and reed pens.

### **Science:**

They had knowledge of mathematics, astrology, chemistry and biology. Pyramids proved that they knew geometry. They followed the Lunar calendar. They preserved dead bodies as 'mummy' by embalming them.

### **Religious Beliefs:**

They believed in life after death. Egyptians worshiped the Sun, River Nile ,various animals and forces of nature. The rich culture of Egypt declined when Alexander the Great invaded Egypt in 332 B.C.

### QUESTIONS

#### **I.A. Fill In The Blanks :**

- 1) A stone inscription bears writing in ancient Egyptian \_\_\_\_\_ script.  
(Cuneiform, Hieroglyphic, Roman)

#### **I.B. MATCH:**

<b>A</b>		<b>B</b>	
1)	Iraq	a)	Nile
2)	China	b)	Euphrates
3)	Egypt	c)	Volga
4)	India	d)	Yangatse
		e)	Indus

		f)	Congo
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**II. Answer in 25 to 30 words:**

- 1) Why was life of the lowest class in Egypt very hard?

**III. Give reasons in 25 to 30 words:**

- 1) Egypt is called the 'Gift of Nile'.

**IV. Answer in 50 to 60 words:**

- 1) What was the contribution of ancient Egypt to science?

**V. Answer in 80 to 100 words:**

- 1) Write a note on the Pyramids and Sphinx.

## ANSWERS

### I.A. Fill In The Blanks :

- 1) A stone inscription bears writing in ancient Egyptian **Hieroglyphic** script.

(Cuneiform, Hieroglyphic, Roman)

### I.B. MATCH:

A		B	
1)	Iraq	a)	Nile
2)	China	b)	Euphrates
3)	Egypt	c)	Volga
4)	India	d)	Yangatse
		e)	Indus
		f)	Congo

Ans.)

A		B	
1)	Iraq	b)	Euphrates
2)	China	d)	Yangatse
3)	Egypt	a)	Nile

4)	India	e)	Indus
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**II. Answer in 25 to 30 words:**

**1) Why was life of the lowest class in Egypt very hard?**

**Ans.)**

**Life of the lowest class in Egypt was very hard :**

- a) They were forced to work in the construction of Pyramids, digging canals and building of roads, along with the slaves.
- b) They were exploited by the state officers.

**III. Give reasons in 25 to 30 words:**

**1) Egypt is called the 'Gift of Nile'.**

**Ans.)**

**Egypt is called the 'Gift of Nile' because:**

- a) The alluvial soil of the Nile valley helped agriculture.
- b) The Nile river made transport easy and possible.
- c) This led to flourishing trade and all round development of Egypt.

**IV. Answer in 50 to 60 words:****1) What was the contribution of ancient Egypt to science?****Ans.)****Egypt made tremendous contribution in the field of Science:**

- a) They made notable advances in subjects like mathematics, astrology, chemistry and biology.
- b) The architectural design of Pyramids proves that they had knowledge of Geometry.
- c) Egyptians had knowledge of Astronomy and made astronomical charts. They knew about the stars and planets.
- d) They used the solar calendar, which was more accurate.
- e) Their practice of embalming the dead body for preserving a mummy proved that they had a deep knowledge of Chemistry and Medicine.

**V. Answer in 80 to 100 words:****1) Write a note on the Pyramids and Sphinx.****Ans.)****Pyramids and Sphinx :**

- a) Pyramids are one of the Wonders of the World. They were massive buildings of huge blocks of stone shape.

- b) The central vault of the Pyramids was used for the burial of a dead body. Kings and wealthy people built such Pyramids for themselves.
- c) The Pyramid of EL-Giza was built by King Khufu in the 29th century BC. About one lac men worked for twenty years to complete it.
- d) The base of this pyramid is 693 square metres and height is 144 meters. Each of the 23 lac huge stone slabs weigh about 2.5 lac tons.
- e) **The Sphinx** which are the imposing statues of kings, carved out of a single stone, show Egyptian skills in sculptor.
- f) The Sphinx is a big stone statue with a human head and body of a lion. One of the sphinxes is 18 metres in height. This shows that the Egyptians had mastered amazing degree of engineering skills to build such wonderful structures.